

## The Current Status of International Trap Standards

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An international effort is currently underway to define "humane" standards for kill-type traps, foothold traps, and other restraining devices used to capture wild furbearers. This effort originated in Canada, a principal producer of wild-trapped furs and a country with a history of strong anti-trap sentiment. These factors have resulted in various Canadian organizations attempting to restrict trap use and to develop more "humane" capture devices. In 1984, a humane standard for kill-type traps was developed and approved by the Canadian General Standards Board.

A U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for Humane Trap Standards was formally established and first met in September 1986. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the U.S. member body of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). ANSI uses TAGs to develop or review national standards. The U.S. TAG is a component of ISO/TC-191 that includes Argentina, Australia, Finland, West Germany, and Sweden, as well as Canada and the United States. The ISO/TC-191 committee was established at the request of Canada and that country serves as the Secretariat.

The purpose of ISO/TC-191 is to develop standards for terminology, classification, characteristics, and test methods for effective and humane mammal traps and their use. Three working groups (WG1-Terminology/Definitions, N. Jotham, Chair; WG2-Killing Traps, J. Jofriet, Chair; and WG3-Restraining Traps, F. Gilbert, Chair) have been established. Although the U.S. TAG will have input to all working groups, it functions as WG3. It has members representing state and national trappers organizations, state and national wildlife management agencies, the AVMA, animal welfare/conservation groups, trap manufacturers and academia.

The U.S. TAG has met five times, most recently in Edmonton in November 1988. The first several meetings were primarily concerned with defining terms such as "humane death", "physical damage", and "capture efficiency" as related to animal capture in restraining traps. However, the last two meetings focused on attempts to draft standards for foothold traps; specifically the establishment of a predetermined numerical value or injury "score" above which traps would be considered unacceptable or "inhumane". The data obtained from the nine-state padded jaw trap study was used as a basis for proposing a cutoff limit of 50 points, using the Olsen injury scoring system. Foothold trap standards were also the focus at the Edmonton meeting where measurement of stress associated with capture, along with physical trauma, was added to the criteria for establishing standards. However, the majority of the U.S. TAG members present in Edmonton concluded that more research was needed before capture device standards could be formulated.

The two working groups on Terminology/Definitions (WG1) and killing traps (WG2) have been less active. WG1 has considered definitions submitted by the other two working groups and WG2 has modified the Canadian standard for killing traps to better fit international requirements.